

UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly
FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION
Official Records

FIFTH COMMITTEE
27th meeting
held on
Tuesday, 17 November 1992
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 27th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. DINU (Romania)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and
Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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OF THE UNITED NATIONS (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 113: UNITED NATIONS COMMON SYSTEM (continued)*

AGENDA ITEM 114: UNITED NATIONS PENSION SYSTEM (continued)*

* Items considered together.

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7 December 1992
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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 111: SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE EXPENSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS (continued) (A/47/11)

1. Mr. ALI (Chairman of the Committee on Contributions) answered questions from the numerous delegations that had spoken in the debate on the scale of assessments, beginning with the questions of principle which had been the focus of many of their statements. Generally, they had called for the scale methodology to be simplified and made more transparent. Some delegations had questioned what had been the cornerstone of the system since 1946, namely Member States' capacity to pay, to the extent of suggesting the creation of an independent high-level body to review that principle.
2. The easy solution would be to calculate assessments in proportion to the distribution of national income averages as shown in column 1 of annex V of the Committee's report (A/47/11). The General Assembly had long ago decided that it was essential to introduce a number of modifying elements to approximate more accurately the capacity to pay of all States, and in particular of the developing and least developed countries. Thus, the current scale methodology was the result of a patchwork of corrective measures adopted over the years in an effort to make it as reflective as possible of Member States' capacity to pay in the light of changing circumstances.
3. Accordingly, the assessment for both developing and developed countries had fluctuated with economic and political developments, modifications of the scale methodology and the growing membership of the United Nations. Despite the considerable movement of the rates, the least developed countries generally had been well protected from crushing financial burdens and the major share of the Organization's expenses had been paid by the dozen or so largest contributors.
4. That being so, care must be taken not to disturb too much, by modifying the methodology underlying it, the delicate balance that had been attained. In that connection, several delegations had made important comments on the length of the statistical base period and the retention or elimination of the scheme of limits. Others had expressed concern about a perceived over-dependence of the scale on per capita income. He recalled that the scale was based on national income data provided by Member States themselves, and that per capita income was used only in the low per capita allowance formula.
5. Turning to more specific questions, he advised the Omani delegation that the population information used by the Committee was taken from the United Nations Demographic Yearbook. He explained, in response to a question from the Cuban delegation, that the application of debt-adjusted income would increase the rates of assessments of a few developing countries because the adjustment took into account debt flows rather than debt stock; it would therefore not be to the advantage of countries that had not made repayments,

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(Mr. Ali)

and could in fact be disadvantageous. The problem, raised by Libya and Oman, of countries whose national income depended largely on non-renewable resources, had occupied the Committee in the context of its discussion of alternative national income concepts. Unfortunately, there were serious problems of definition and valuation.

6. With regard to the statements by Member States that had been part of the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, the Committee would address the insufficiencies of its transitional proposals in the context of the next scale and would endeavour to make the rates of the Member States concerned more reflective of their changed circumstances. With particular regard to Belarus and Ukraine, the Committee had in no way intended to redefine their membership status. Rather, it had simply been faced with the necessity of determining both Member States' assessment for the first time on the basis of actual data, and had done so in the same manner as in the case of other States that had just joined the United Nations.

7. Mr. GOUDIMA (Ukraine) thanked the Chairman of the Committee on Contributions for his clarifying remarks. He wondered, however, why the consensus decision had been reviewed in the case of Ukraine, although other Member States' assessments had not been received and Ukraine's status had not changed. It might be supposed that the Committee had been motivated by political considerations, thus violating Article 2 of the Charter, which stipulated that the Organization was based on respect for the principle of equal rights of all Member States. His delegation failed to see why the Committee had not thought fit, in that one case, to apply the scheme of limits. That departure from a principle, always previously respected, had resulted in an increase of more than 50 per cent in Ukraine's assessment. His delegation saw no logic in the explanations given.

8. Instead of reviewing the assessments of Ukraine and Belarus, it would have been more logical for the Committee, after calculating the assessments of the new Member States, to ask the successor State of the former USSR to assume responsibility for the undistributed balance of that State's assessment, since it was assuming its obligations. Ukraine was ready to pay the assessment that the Committee might have set for the period 1995-1997. It had always appreciated the Committee's purposeful avoidance of any political influence. It was true that former scales of assessment had been worked out with some difficulty, but the Committee had used a method for reaching a solution acceptable to all Member States through reasonable compromises. At the latest session, such had not been the case. So as to avoid creating a precedent by arbitrarily modifying a consensus resolution and bringing about a situation that could, if necessary, lead to a revision of the Charter and the rules of procedure, his delegation appealed to members of the Fifth Committee to limit the Committee's recommendations to calculating new Member States' assessments. Otherwise, his delegation would have difficulty in joining a consensus on the Committee's report.

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AGENDA ITEM 113: UNITED NATIONS COMMON SYSTEM (continued) (A/47/30; A/C.5/47/25 and 36 to 38)

AGENDA ITEM 114: UNITED NATIONS PENSION SYSTEM (continued) (A/47/9, A/47/578; A/C.5/47/8 and 25)

9. The CHAIRMAN informed the Committee that he had received communications from the International Labour Office staff and from the Union of General Service Staff of the Food and Agriculture Organization. Both of them rejected the changes, suggested by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC), to the method used for calculating pensionable remuneration for the General Service and considered the decisions taken by ICSC in July 1992 unlawful.

10. Mr. INOMATA (Japan) expressed great concern that the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) had again paid a special post allowance to almost all of its staff despite the strong opposition of the General Assembly and the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC). That practice was at odds with the purpose of the common system, which was to eliminate competition and promote interchange among the staffs of the organizations. Moreover, even supposing the rules were not flexible enough, or the salary scale did not suit a given organization, they should be amended for the system as a whole and not for an individual organization. His delegation therefore strongly supported the ICSC recommendation that it should be invited to meetings where proposals pertaining to salaries, allowances and other conditions of employment were discussed. Consideration should be given to amending the rules on the authority of ICSC, if necessary, to prevent such ill-advised actions as that taken by ITU.

11. Turning to the chapter of the ICSC report (A/47/30) dealing with pensionable remuneration among other subjects, his delegation was of the opinion that it was of paramount importance to preserve the balance between the pension benefits of officials who received pensions from their own organizations and those of similarly situated officials who were participants in the Pension Fund. The proposal of the Blanchard group was unacceptable as it would lead to considerable discrepancies, even taking into account the statutory limits on the terms of both groups. The first of the two alternatives envisaged by ICSC had the advantage that under that scheme the management of contributions would entail no administrative costs. However, his delegation could not support either without further information on the methodology used to arrive at the income replacement ratios, which it found surprisingly high.

12. The most serious problem in connection with pensionable remuneration for the General Service was the so-called income inversion, which could not only affect the morale of Professional staff but also destabilize the entire system. His delegation welcomed the ICSC decisions taken as a first step towards elimination of the anomalies, and expected ICSC to take further measures to eliminate the problem in the near future. Recalling that the General Assembly had agreed, in its resolution 46/192 II, that the income

(Mr. Inomata, Japan)

replacement approach should apply to General Service staff as it did to others, his delegation fully endorsed the views expressed by the representatives of governing bodies before the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board, which appeared in annex VIII, part C, of the Board's report (A/47/9).

13. His delegation was prepared to give serious consideration to improving the conditions of service of the Professional and higher categories, which was closely connected with the broader question of how to improve the quality of the staff. It was indispensable to attract the most qualified candidates for posts, even if they were from countries with high per capita income, while streamlining organizations so that the financial burden which Member States must bear remained at a reasonable level.

14. With respect to the ICSC recommendations, his delegation supported the scale increase of 6.9 per cent, provided the financial situation permitted, and endorsed the proposal for ICSC to begin studying the idea of special rates in certain specialized technical fields, on the express understanding that they should be applied not to all categories but only to select occupational groups. His delegation did not object to the ICSC decision on the rental subsidy scheme, contained in paragraph 130 of its report, but requested the Commission to devise a consistent scheme and to ensure that any increase of allowances and benefits should comply as strictly as possible with the pertinent rules governing entitlement and calculation. Lastly, Japan took the view that before reaching a final judgement on the existing provisions on the mobility and hardship scheme, which were only two years old, the Committee should wait for the ICSC report expected in 1995.

15. On the conditions of service of the General Service, his delegation found some fault with the principle of "best prevailing conditions of service" at each duty station, which could in some cases lead to extremely high salaries. It should be borne in mind that the problem at the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) had arisen when differences in the conditions of service of the Professional and General Service staffs had narrowed; it would be necessary one day to establish guidelines for determining the relationship between the salaries of the two categories of staff. Accordingly, his delegation strongly supported the ICSC decision regarding the general method of surveying the best prevailing conditions of employment at headquarters duty stations (A/47/30, para. 31).

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.

UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly
FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION
Official Records

FIFTH COMMITTEE
28th meeting
held on
Wednesday, 18 November 1992
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 28th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. DINU (Romania)

later: Mr. ZAHID (Morocco)
(Vice-Chairman)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative
and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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(continued)

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Proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997
(continued)

AGENDA ITEM 104: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993 (continued)

Granting of travel assistance to least developed and other developing
countries that are members of the United Nations Commission on
International Trade Law

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 112: PERSONNEL QUESTIONS (continued)

- (b) RESPECT FOR THE PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES OF OFFICIALS OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND RELATED ORGANIZATIONS (continued)

Draft resolution A/C.5/47/L.2

1. Mr. SPAANS (Netherlands), introducing draft resolution A/C.5/47/L.2, pointed out that its preamble was virtually the same as that of the draft resolutions presented in previous years. In its operative part, the General Assembly deplored violations of privileges and immunities committed against United Nations personnel, in particular those engaged in peace-keeping operations. It reminded host countries of their responsibility for the safety of all United Nations personnel on their territory and reiterated the importance of providing access of United Nations medical teams to detained staff. Finally, it requested the Secretary-General to take all necessary measures to ensure the safety of United Nations personnel and to continue his efforts to ensure respect for their privileges and immunities. In his capacity as the coordinator of the informal consultations, he proposed that the Committee should adopt the draft resolution without a vote. He pointed out that, in the course of the consultations, a number of delegations had suggested that the question of respect for privileges and immunities should be included in the agenda of future sessions of the Assembly as a separate item, but it had been agreed that the Committee would take a decision on that suggestion outside the discussions on draft resolution A/C.5/47/L.2.

2. Draft resolution A/C.5/47/L.2 was adopted without a vote.

3. Mr. DUQUE (Director of Personnel) thanked the representative of the Netherlands, on behalf of the Secretariat, for coordinating the consultations on the draft resolution. The question dealt with in the draft resolution was of major importance to the staff. The wording of paragraphs 7 and 8 clearly showed that the General Assembly was concerned about the safety of United Nations officials and of all personnel - military, civilian or observer - engaged in peace-keeping operations and humanitarian operations throughout the world.

AGENDA ITEM 105: PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued) (A/47/3, A/47/6, A/47/16 (Parts I and II) and Add.1 and A/47/32 and Add.1)

Proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997

Major programme I

4. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to consider the proposed revisions to major programme I, entitled "Maintenance of Peace and Security, Disarmament and Decolonization". He informed the Committee that a reminder had been sent

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(The Chairman)

to the Secretaries of the First, Fourth and Special Political Committees, inviting the input of those Committees on the proposed revisions. Pending their replies, he suggested that delegations should make their comments on the eight individual programmes in major programme I so that the Committee could take a decision on the recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) with regard to each of the programmes, on the understanding that discussions could continue in informal consultations.

5. Mr. MORET (Cuba) thought that it would be preferable to hear the views of the Main Committees before beginning consideration of the various programmes.

6. Mr. STITT (United Kingdom) said that his delegation was prepared to go along with any procedure which would speed up the work of the Committee, provided, of course, that due allowance could be made for the views expressed by delegations and the other Main Committees. The procedure suggested by the Chairman appeared to meet those requirements, since the Committee would be free to revert to any programme or subprogramme if the replies from the other Main Committees made that necessary. Delegations could also express their views during the informal consultations if they were not in agreement with some of the recommendations of CPC.

7. Mr. ZAHID (Morocco) agreed with the representative of the United Kingdom. According to the procedure suggested by the Chairman, the revisions would be approved on a provisional basis.

8. Mr. BEN HAMIDA (Tunisia) thought that it would be better to wait for the reply from the First Committee before considering major programme I, relating to peace-keeping. In order to speed up its work, the Committee could, however, consider other major programmes, for example those dealing with economic questions, since it had already received the Second Committee's comments.

9. The CHAIRMAN said that he was not sure whether the Committee had all the information it needed to start its consideration of major programmes III and IV. As for major programme I, he had assumed that it was only programme 4 which appeared to give rise to disagreement. The Committee could thus consider the various programmes of major programme I, leaving programme 4 aside for the moment.

10. Mr. ZAHID (Morocco), Mr. OSELLA (Argentina) and Ms. ROTHEISER (Austria) supported the Chairman's suggestion.

11. Mr. SPAANS (Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Coordination) said that CPC had made recommendations on all the programmes except subprogramme 4 of programme 4. The Committee could thus proceed to take a decision on most of major programme I.

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12. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to examine major programme I, programme by programme, on the understanding that informal consultations would be organized if necessary and that the replies from the other Main Committees would be taken into account.

Programme 1

13. The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the recommendations of CPC relating to programme 1 were contained in paragraphs 30 and 31 of its report (A/47/16 (Part II)).

14. Mr. MORET (Cuba) said that the term "preventive diplomacy", in the title of the programme and of subprogramme 1, was unacceptable to his delegation. The proposed revision to paragraph 1.10 of subprogramme 1 sought to introduce that concept on the basis of the Secretary-General's report entitled "An Agenda for Peace". That document could not, however, constitute a mandate for programmes since it had not been approved by the General Assembly. Furthermore, the new paragraph 1.19 of subprogramme 3 referred to threats to peace, crises and disputes without using the word "international"; it might thus be thought to refer also to internal conflicts, which were within the exclusive jurisdiction of States. The same problem applied to the reference to peace and security in subparagraph (b) of paragraph 1.21, dealing with the collection and analysis of information. His delegation therefore felt that the Committee should wait for the replies from the other Main Committees and consider the programme in informal consultations.

15. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the recommendations of CPC on programme 1, as contained in paragraphs 30 and 31 of its report (A/47/16 (Part II)), on the understanding that the comments made on that programme would be taken into consideration during informal consultations.

16. It was so decided.

Programme 2

17. The CHAIRMAN said that the recommendations of CPC relating to programme 2 were to be found in paragraph 37 of its report (A/47/16 (Part II)).

18. Mr. MORET (Cuba) proposed that programme 2 should be referred to informal consultations.

19. Mr. ZAHID (Morocco) said that delegations should proceed to make their comments on the programme so that the discussions could be reflected in the summary records.

20. Mr. DUHALT (Mexico) agreed with the representative of Morocco that it would be better for delegations to indicate their positions before holding informal consultations, the purpose of which was precisely to reconcile those positions.

21. Mr. MORET (Cuba) said that his delegation's reservations related to the fact that, as its new title indicated, programme 2 was intended to strengthen the role of the Security Council. However, that title no longer corresponded to the contents of the only subprogramme under the programme. Issues relating to peace and security considered by the First Committee and by the subsidiary organs of the Security Council were therefore not covered by the programme's title and were thus relegated to secondary importance. Moreover, reference to the title of programme 1, which contained the words "preventive diplomacy", was unnecessary.

22. Mr. STITT (United Kingdom) said that if delegations made proposals which fell outside the framework of the recommendations of CPC, it could have an adverse effect on the informal consultations. For his part, he did not wish to jeopardize the consensus that the CPC recommendations represented, even if those recommendations did not always reflect his delegation's position.

23. The CHAIRMAN said that programme 2 as a whole would be referred to informal consultations.

Programme 3

24. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to endorse the recommendation of CPC relating to programme 3 contained in paragraph 42 of its report (A/47/16 (Part II)).

25. It was so decided.

Programme 4

26. The CHAIRMAN noted that, in paragraph 53 of its report, CPC had made recommendations on subprogrammes 1 to 3. It had, however, been unable to reach an agreed recommendation on subprogramme 4. He therefore suggested that programme 4 as a whole should be referred to informal consultations.

Programme 5

27. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to endorse the recommendation of CPC relating to programme 5 contained in paragraph 58 of its report (A/47/16 (Part II)).

28. It was so decided.

29. Mr. COHEN (United States of America) said that the views of the United States on programme 5 were well known and recalled his country's reservations with regard to the aims and effects of the programme, which did not contribute to the peace process in the Middle East.

Programme 6

30. The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the recommendations of CPC relating to programme 6 were to be found in paragraph 65 of its report (A/47/16 (Part II)).

31. Mr. MORET (Cuba) noted that in the proposed revisions, there was no longer any mention of a number of resolutions which described the situation in South Africa as a threat to international peace and security. That meant that the issue could not be brought before the Security Council. Moreover, the new subparagraph 6.36 (formerly subpara. 6.25) was based on "the consensus resolutions"; that constituted a dangerous precedent since all resolutions had the same value for the medium-term plan, irrespective of how they had been adopted.

32. Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda) fully agreed with the comments of the Cuban delegation with regard to the danger of excluding some resolutions on the grounds that they had not been adopted by consensus. He also wished to point out that the improvement of the situation in South Africa in no way meant that apartheid had been eliminated; the medium-term plan should therefore not be modified as if the problem no longer existed. His delegation was also concerned about the volume of resources devoted to the programme and would like to know, in particular, how many posts were vacant in the Centre Against Apartheid and whether those posts were frozen. He would also like the Secretariat to provide similar information on preventive diplomacy activities in Africa.

33. Mr. BAUDOT (Acting Controller) said that none of the posts in the budget relating to the elimination of apartheid had been frozen. As for vacancies in the Centre Against Apartheid, only 2 of the 19 Professional posts were vacant and none of the 15 General Service posts was vacant.

34. Mr. COHEN (United States) noted that, by definition, the recommendations of CPC were the outcome of many compromises and could therefore not be totally satisfactory to anyone. If the debate on all those delicate issues were reopened, the consensus achieved by CPC might be jeopardized.

35. Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda) said that his delegation had been involved in the compromises worked out in CPC and supported them. However, the situation might perhaps have changed since the Committee's latest session as a result of the programmatic impact of the revised estimates and of the new proposals of the Secretary-General. His delegation's questions were intended to clarify those changes.

36. Mr. STITT (United Kingdom) said that the first reading on which the Committee seemed to be engaged might result in the referral of a very large number of programmes to the informal consultations. That being the case, his delegation reserved the right to review its overall position at a later stage and to request that the debate be reopened on certain other programmes.

37. The CHAIRMAN said that programme 6 was referred to the informal consultations.

Programme 7

38. The CHAIRMAN said that the recommendations of CPC on programme 7 were contained in paragraph 68 of its report (A/47/16 (Part II)).

39. Mr. ORR (Canada) said that his delegation had already raised the question of the functioning of the disarmament programmes and stressed the need to ensure that they enjoyed the necessary support. Canada attached particular importance to the CPC recommendation in paragraph 68 (b) of its report concerning the establishment and maintenance of a Register of Conventional Arms. It seemed that the First Committee was considering a draft resolution requesting the Secretary-General to ensure that sufficient resources were made available to the Secretariat for the establishment and maintenance of the Register, and in paragraph 36 of his report on the new dimensions of arms regulation and disarmament (A/C.1/47/7) the Secretary-General had assured the General Assembly that the Organization would do all that it could to make the Register an efficient and successful service for Member States. Canada fully supported the efforts made by the Secretary-General to restructure the Organization and hoped that, within that framework and within the limits of the Organization's resources, the new Office for Disarmament Affairs would have sufficient staff not only to establish and maintain the Register and the disarmament data base but also to carry out its other priority tasks. Pending the proposals to be made on that subject in the next proposed programme budget, his delegation hoped that the Secretary-General, using the room for manoeuvre available to him in the use of resources, would invest the Office with the necessary means for it to function successfully.

40. Mr. TEIRLINCK (Belgium), Mr. PENEV (Bulgaria), Ms. ICHIKAWA (Japan), Mr. SHARMA (Nepal) and Ms. ROEDSMOEN (Norway) said that their delegations fully supported the views of the Canadian delegation.

41. Mr. MORET (Cuba) said that his delegation disagreed with the replacement of the Department for Disarmament Affairs by the Department of Political Affairs. There was also a proposal to insert a new paragraph 7.9 indicating a considerable shift in priorities, something which his delegation could not accept with respect to programme 7. There were in fact no priorities other than those stated in paragraph 45 of the final document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly. Lastly, paragraph 7.9 (b), concerning the summit meeting of the Security Council on 31 July 1992, seemed to impose an order of priorities on the Council's disarmament activities. For all those reasons his delegation thought it preferable to refer programme 7 to the informal consultations.

42. Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda) said that his delegation endorsed the views of the Canadian delegation but thought that the regional disarmament centres should play an important role in the realization of the programme's objectives. The

(Mr. Irumba, Uganda)

Secretariat had been requested to submit a report on the funding of the centres, which should be strengthened and given sufficient resources.

43. Mr. ONWUALIA (Nigeria) and Mr. JADMANI (Pakistan) said that their delegations agreed with the views of the Ugandan delegation on the need to strengthen the regional centres.

44. Mr. STITT (United Kingdom) asked whether the question of the relationship between the various elements in the plan and the corresponding resources really fell within the scope of the item under consideration.

45. Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda) said that it was important to consider the question, not only because it determined whether the approved programmes would actually be implemented but also because it would speed up the consideration of the revised budget estimates.

46. The CHAIRMAN said that the item under consideration dealt with the proposed revisions to the medium-term plan and that related questions, including questions of resources, could be raised in the informal consultations.

47. Mr. BAUDOT (Acting Controller) said that there were three P-5 posts for the heads of the three regional centres and, as far as he recalled, none of the posts was vacant. Furthermore, a report on the administrative costs of the centres was to be put before the Committee at any moment. As to the more general question of the relationship between the medium-term plan and resources, it was both legitimate and useful for delegations to say what they thought on the topic and to ask the Secretariat for information during formal meetings, but it would be preferable for the informal consultations to deal only with matters relating directly to the revisions to the plan.

48. The CHAIRMAN said that programme 7 was referred to the informal consultations.

Programme 8

49. The CHAIRMAN said that, if there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to endorse the CPC recommendation on programme 8, which was contained in paragraph 70 of its report.

50. It was so decided.

51. Mr. Zahid (Morocco), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM 104: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993 (continued)
(A/C.5/47/CRP.1, A/46/349 and A/47/454)

Granting of travel assistance to least developed and other developing countries that are members of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law

52. The CHAIRMAN reminded the Committee that he had been requested to organize informal consultations on the question of the granting of travel assistance to least developed and other developing countries that were members of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law. Despite the flexibility shown by all delegations and the progress made in the consultations, owing to lack of time it had not been possible to reach a consensus on the request made by the Sixth Committee. It had therefore been agreed to continue the informal consultations, and the Chairman of the Sixth Committee had agreed to that arrangement. He therefore suggested that the informal consultation should be continued and that the item should be taken up again when an agreement had been reached.

53. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly
FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION
Official Records

FIFTH COMMITTEE
29th meeting
held on
Thursday, 19 November 1992
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 29th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. DINU (Romania)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and
Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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AGENDA ITEM 113: UNITED NATIONS COMMON SYSTEM (continued)*

AGENDA ITEM 114: UNITED NATIONS PENSION SYSTEM (continued)*

AGENDA ITEM 104: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993 (continued)

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.1/47/L.1/Rev.2
concerning agenda item 60

AGENDA ITEM 105: PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued)

Proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997

* Items considered together.

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 113: UNITED NATIONS COMMON SYSTEM (continued) (A/47/30; A/C.5/47/25 and A/C.5/47/36 to 38)

AGENDA ITEM 114: UNITED NATIONS PENSION SYSTEM (continued) (A/47/9 and A/47/578; A/C.5/47/8 and A/C.5/47/25)

1. Mr. ENGFELTD (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the five Nordic countries, said it was encouraging to note the Secretary-General's statement in his report on the work of the Organization A/47/1 that the restructuring process should be accompanied by a deeper appreciation and respect for the international civil service and that special emphasis would be placed on the improvement of the conditions of service.
2. The Nordic delegations wished to reaffirm their support of the common system. The fact that national subsidies now seemed to be on the increase suggested that the United Nations was not a competitive employer; compensation levels must be adjusted with a view to eliminating such practices and enabling the system to attract the best possible people regardless of their countries of origin.
3. The granting by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) of a special post allowance to 90 per cent of the staff in the Professional and higher categories was contrary to the rules and spirit of the common system. By paying a second instalment of that allowance, the ITU was also violating its own regulations. The Nordic countries urged the ITU to reconsider the payment of further special allowances, which had been condemned by both the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) and the General Assembly. They supported the Commission's recommendation that all organizations should invite the Commission to be represented at meetings where proposals pertaining to salaries, allowances, benefits and other conditions of employment were discussed; the presence of the ICSC at such meetings would prove beneficial to all parties concerned and lead to a strengthening of the common system.
4. The most serious anomaly arising from the method of calculation of the pensionable remuneration of staff in the General Service category was that of income inversion as compared with the salaries of professionals. It was obvious that present salary and pension methodologies for the General Service needed to be modified, and that, as the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) had emphasized, any changes in the system should not result in an erosion of current conditions. The issue should therefore be deferred until a solution had been found.
5. The Nordic countries supported the Commission's recommendation, which had been endorsed by the ACC, that the base/floor salary scale should be increased by 6.9 per cent through consolidation of post-adjustment classes as from 1 March 1993.

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(Mr. Engfeldt, Sweden)

6. In view of the problems connected with the recruitment of highly specialized staff, the introduction of special occupational rates might be a useful tool and the fact that the comparator had already made use of them should make them more acceptable. The Nordic delegations therefore supported a feasibility study, but considered that such rates should be applied on a very restrictive basis and constitute an exception.

7. The Nordic delegations endorsed in principle the proposed increases in children's allowances and those of secondary dependants. The proposed increase of maximum educational allowances also seemed well founded.

8. The issue of the conditions of service of Under-Secretaries-General, Assistant Secretaries-General and equivalent levels should be acted upon without delay. The fact that the restructuring had entered its second phase should not delay the adjustment of the remuneration levels of high-level staff members to meet the equivalent levels of the comparator civil service; the elimination of several posts in the top echelon should facilitate that adjustment.

9. The Nordic delegations supported the recommendations contained in the report of the Working Group on the Status of Women. They agreed that an overall strategy should be developed in each organization and reactivated if it failed to meet the goals that had been set. Follow-up measures, in particular to place responsibility at sufficiently authoritative levels, were a crucial element in meeting those goals. The Nordic delegations endorsed the Commission's decision to collect statistical data on the representation of women in the common system. They had noted with regret that there were no women in the top positions of the Secretariat and hoped that that anomaly would soon be addressed. They welcomed the assurances of the Secretary-General that he intended to do all he could to bring the balance in policy-level positions to 50-50 by the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations.

10. With regard to the United Nations pensions system, the Nordic delegations endorsed in principle the recommendations of the Joint Staff Pension Board and the draft resolution in annex XVI of its report. They considered that the real rate of return of 4.3 per cent was highly satisfactory given economic conditions.

11. The Nordic delegations were among the proponents of the biennialization of the work programme of the Fifth Committee, which should facilitate and rationalize its work. That measure should not, however, have negative effects on staff conditions, and exceptions should therefore be applied to safeguard salary adjustments.

12. Mr. BEN HAMIDA (Tunisia) drew attention to the obvious contribution made by the Organization's staff to the attainment of its goals and considered that the participation of staff representatives in the discussion of questions affecting their interests was desirable. The ICSC should be strongly

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(Mr. Ben Hamida, Tunisia)

supported and encouraged. Its working methods and rules of procedure could not be amended or interpreted according to the wishes of some delegations. The ICSC must maintain its impartiality and be immune to pressure. It would be useful to consider means of ensuring its independence, including financial means.

13. The improvement of conditions of service, career enhancement and salary adjustment were all questions which should be dealt with by seeking a balance between the need to increase remuneration and to improve professional efficiency and cost-benefits. His delegation approved the steps advocated by the Commission to improve the status and working conditions of women and considered that a sustained collective effort was needed to achieve that goal.

14. Mr. GABRIEL (Philippines) said that the ICSC decision to request the General Assembly to examine adjustments to the base/floor salary scale on an annual basis, which his delegation supported, responded to the concerns of staff representatives regarding the effects on staff entitlements of the biennialization of the Fifth Committee's programme of work.

15. He regretted the continued payment by ITU of a special post allowance. His delegation supported the ICSC recommendation that it should be mandatory for all organizations to invite the Commission to be represented at meetings where proposals pertaining to salaries, allowances and benefits and other conditions of employment were discussed in order to avoid similar situations in future.

16. His delegation endorsed the guidelines proposed by the Commission on pension arrangements for elected ungraded officials. With regard to the methodology for determining pensionable remuneration for General Service staff, he noted that the staff representatives had strongly objected to the income replacement approach to remedy the problem of income inversion. He hoped that it would be possible to find some middle ground and that revision of the current methodology would not deprive staff members of an adequate pension.

17. His delegation found merit in the Commission's recommendation to increase the current base/floor salary scale by 6.9 per cent with effect from 1 March 1993. Nevertheless a further corrective adjustment might be necessary in view of the anticipated increase in salaries in the United States Federal Civil Service on 1 January 1993.

18. There was no doubt that the methodology used to determine the cost-of-living differential between New York and Washington was deficient. The new methodology should be refined and implemented as soon as possible. His delegation favoured the introduction of special occupational rates as a means of addressing recruitment problems in some technical fields. His delegation also supported the Commission's recommendation regarding dependency allowances for the Professional and higher categories.

(Mr. Gabriel, Philippines)

19. The staff representatives claimed that certain data had been excluded from the surveys of best prevailing conditions of employment at headquarters duty stations. While he had full confidence in the technical expertise of the Commission, it might be wise for it to look into the matter further to remove any uncertainty. The Flemming principle remained the basis for determining the conditions of service of the General Service and related categories, but that should not be used as a reason to reject the results of a survey, if accurate, simply because they did not conform to expectations.

20. With regard to the education grant, due to rising costs there was a need to increase the maximum level of admissible expenses, the maximum grant and the ceiling for boarding costs for areas where education-related expenses were incurred in certain currencies. His delegation supported the Commission's recommendations regarding the amount of the special education grant for disabled children and the amount of additional reimbursement of boarding costs. The mobility and hardship scheme had been operating satisfactorily, and the existing parameters should be maintained, as recommended by the Commission. His delegation appreciated the efforts of the Working Group on the Status of Women in the United Nations System and hoped that the Secretary-General would be able to move closer to the goal of increasing the percentage of women employed by the United Nations in policy-level positions to around 50 per cent by the fiftieth anniversary of the Organization.

21. His delegation commended the managers of the Pension Fund for their efficient management of the Fund, which had resulted in an overall rate of return of 7.6 per cent for the year ending 31 March 1992, notwithstanding adverse world economic conditions.

22. Mr. KUZNETSOV (Russian Federation) said that his delegation welcomed the Commission's decision to review its programme of work to take account of the biennialization of the work of the Fifth Committee. Noting with surprise that the staff representatives had refused to engage in a constructive dialogue with the Commission at its most recent session, he recalled that the Commission had developed balanced machinery for consultation which, in his view, should be maintained and consolidated.

23. He commended the efforts made by the Commission to preserve and strengthen the common system, since he was convinced that a unified system was essential in ensuring the rational utilization of the resources of the organizations. He noted with concern that ITU had compromised the unity of the common system by deciding to pay a special post allowance to its staff and he endorsed the conclusions of ICSC in that regard. The resolution on the common system to be adopted by the Fifth Committee must contain effective provisions to ensure that such a situation could not recur in future.

24. In 1992 the comprehensive review of the pensionable remuneration and the corresponding pensions of the General Service and related categories had occupied an important place in the work of the Commission. His delegation

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(Mr. Kuznetsov, Russian Federation)

noted with satisfaction that the Commission had taken an appropriate position by opting for the income replacement approach. With respect to the selection of a specific alternative within that approach, doubt remained inasmuch as the principal shortcoming of the current system - the phenomenon of income inversion - would not disappear. His delegation trusted that the additional work being done in that area would lead to the desired outcome.

25. His delegation strongly supported the Commission's decisions regarding the methodology to be employed in determining the best conditions of employment at headquarters duty stations. The implementation of those decisions would allow conditions of employment on local labour markets to be assessed more precisely and objectively.

26. With respect to ungraded officials who were not participants in the Pension Fund, his delegation endorsed the Commission's view that the pensions of the individuals concerned should be comparable to those of their counterparts who were participants in the Fund. Account must also be taken of the level of resources of the organizations. The options presented in annex III to the report did not offer a completely satisfactory solution. Accordingly, the approach followed by ICAO (A/47/30, para. 64) deserved further study.

27. Without being opposed to an increase in base/floor salary levels, his delegation wished to emphasize that the establishment of a rigid link between increases granted under the base/floor salary scale and automatic increases in mobility and hardship allowances continued to give cause for concern. His delegation could not support the formula currently used in the matrix. The proposed system was very costly, and questionable from a technical standpoint. With the parameters currently used, staff sometimes had an objective interest in requesting a transfer from a hardship duty station to a duty station where conditions of employment were more attractive since the transfer would result in higher pay. Further, owing to the existence of the allowance, some organizations were having difficulty in bringing their staff back from field offices to Headquarters.

28. The information given in the report of the International Civil Service Commission about the new procedure for the determination of the cost-of-living differential between New York and Washington, D.C. was too sketchy to permit adopting a definitive position. His delegation hoped that more detailed explanations would be provided in the course of informal consultations. Noting that some of the elements and parameters inherent in the new procedure were open to controversy, he expressed serious reservations with regard to the idea of extending the method to the system as a whole. As could be seen from paragraph 142 of the report, the proposed model did not even enjoy the unanimous support of all members of the Commission. His delegation could not approve the method as proposed because it entailed a risk of seriously distorting the calculation of the margin, which remained the chief criterion for evaluating the level of remuneration of Professional staff. His

(Mr. Kuznetsov, Russian Federation)

delegation shared the view of those Commission members who had proposed that the current methodology should remain in effect until the results of the implementation of the Federal Employees' Pay Comparability Act (FEPCA) were known.

29. His delegation was not, on the whole, opposed to the Commission studying the possibility of using special rates for certain occupational fields. It felt, however, that the greatest caution was called for in that connection; the system should not be automatically extended to categories of staff which could not be regarded as specialized occupational groups.

30. His delegation noted with regret that, as in previous years, the Commission's studies tended to focus on matters relating to remuneration. The Commission seemed to forget that the General Assembly at its forty-fifth and forty-sixth sessions had invited it to give greater attention to matters referred to in articles 13 and 14 of its statute. In that connection, his delegation welcomed the assurance given by the Chairman of the Commission in his introductory statement that the Commission would henceforth give greater prominence to questions such as human resource planning, career development, productivity and performance appraisal in terms of the common system.

31. Mr. NA CHAMPASSAK (Australia), speaking on behalf of the delegations of Australia, Canada and New Zealand, stressed the importance of the common system, which was a means not only of harmonizing personnel procedures but also of controlling personnel costs. It was regrettable, therefore, that distortions had occurred in some duty stations and that some organizations had deemed fit to depart from the common rules. The delegations he represented expected ITU to respect its undertaking to refrain in future from granting special post allowances to its headquarters-based Professional staff. At a more general level, it was important that agencies should maintain a dialogue on such matters with ICSC and CCAQ. The three delegations therefore endorsed the ICSC recommendation that it should be mandatory for all organizations to invite the Commission to be represented at meetings where proposals pertaining to common system issues were discussed.

32. Unlike certain other delegations, Australia, Canada and New Zealand considered that overall remuneration in the United Nations was reasonable. It was competitive in the General Service category and reasonably competitive in salaries of the Professional category, especially when allowances were included. The ICSC recommendation for a 6.9 per cent increase in the current base/floor salary scale for Professional and higher categories from 1 March 1993 deserved careful study in the light of the forthcoming ACABQ report on the matter and on the assumption that any real cost increases arising from the increase would be met from efficiency dividends and other offsets.

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(Mr. Na Champassak, Australia)

33. Australia, Canada and New Zealand also had no objection to consideration being given to an increase in net remuneration at the Under-Secretary-General and Assistant Secretary-General levels provided that increase too was met from efficiency dividends and other cost-cutting measures. Their definitive position would, however, be determined by any subsequent restructuring of the Secretariat, including the possible creation of a D-3 category. Further, they took the view that the representation allowance granted to holders of high-ranking positions should be made accountable and the expenses should be itemized so that the amounts involved should not be construed as another salary increase.

34. While understanding the rationale behind the ICSC recommendations to increase dependency allowances and the education grant, the three delegations wished to emphasize that the allowances and grants, which were not based on the comparator, were of significant benefit to eligible staff.

35. Australia, Canada and New Zealand fully supported the Commission's decision to conduct a feasibility study on establishing special occupational rates for the common system. In the case of the Professional category, such rates could be based on the comparator employer approach.

36. The process of periodic review of the method of conducting salary surveys for General Service staff at the seven Headquarters locations was a necessary one. However, the three delegations doubted the need for the "transitional measures" for Geneva referred to in paragraph 221 of the ICSC report (A/47/30), and reserved their position on decision (b) (vi) in paragraph 231.

37. The three delegations, convinced of the usefulness of mobility and hardship incentives for staff, were pleased to learn that preliminary findings showed those schemes to be beneficial to both employer and employee, and invited the Commission to submit more detailed information on the matter at the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly. Lastly, agreeing that other aspects of personnel management - upon which part of the attraction of a career in the international civil service partially depended - deserved as much attention as the question of remuneration, they proposed that the Commission should further develop and standardize the classification of posts and should assist in the development of a new performance appraisal system.

38. Turning to the report of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board (A/47/9), he noted with satisfaction the reduction in the actuarial imbalance reflected in the valuation of the Fund as at 31 December 1990, but noted that in dollar terms the actuarial imbalance might be as high as \$2.7 billion. The three delegations urged the Joint Staff Pension Board to disclose the precise amount of the imbalance in its financial statement and to spare no effort in continuing to improve the actuarial trend. As for the Fund's investment performance, it appeared to be reasonable, but the figures would be more convincing if presented in comparative terms against appropriate investment benchmarks.

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(Mr. Na Champassak, Australia)

39. After rejecting the Blanchard Group's proposal regarding pension arrangements for elected ungraded officials, ICSC had proposed two alternatives, neither of which was attractive. The question should simply not arise: those officials should be members of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund, like other officials.

40. The methodology for determining the pensionable remuneration rates for General Service staff was a highly contentious issue. The current scheme led to anomalies such as the phenomenon of "income inversion", which resulted from the methods used since 1962 to gross up the net salaries of General Service staff. While endorsing the Pension Board Chairman's proposal that pensionable remuneration for General Service staff could be calculated on the basis of their net salary as outlined in the Board's report, he noted that no consensus had been reached by the Board on the matter, and that care must be taken not to create new anomalies while eliminating current ones.

41. Lastly, it was regrettable that staff representatives had decided to break off the consultations provided for under the Statutes of ICSC and of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board.

42. Mr. STITT (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the European Community and its member States, noted the improvement in the quality of the ICSC report and recognized that, if it was still not totally transparent on every issue, that was because of the complexity of the subject.

43. The Twelve, which had supported General Assembly resolution 46/220, noted the concerns felt by members of ICSC and the Pension Board about the implications of biennialization. They believed, however, that both bodies could succeed in adapting to that new work pattern - availing themselves, where necessary, of the possibilities for exceptions that had been provided for.

44. The importance of the common system could not be overemphasized: not only did it simplify matters for the organizations themselves; it also constituted a cornerstone for the coordination of the programmes and activities undertaken by those organizations. In adhering voluntarily to the common system, each organization accepted its obligations, and any unilateral action on the part of an organization could cause it to lose the corresponding benefits, as was confirmed in General Assembly resolution 46/191.

45. The independence of ICSC, which was responsible for overseeing the functioning of the common system, must not be called into question. Those participating in consultations must be ready to compromise. While the more courteous tone adopted by staff representatives was appreciated, it was a matter for deep concern that one representative had very explicitly questioned the legitimacy of ICSC.

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(Mr. Stitt, United Kingdom)

46. It was also a matter for concern that some administrations might be tempted, if they failed to find common ground with their staff, to go directly to their governing bodies without consulting ICSC - as had happened in the cases of the United Nations Development Programme, the International Atomic Energy Agency and the International Telecommunication Union. The Twelve had consistently held the view that ICSC and the Pension Board should be systematically consulted before any proposal relating to conditions of service was put to any governing body, and that they should always be invited to be present at meetings devoted to consideration of such proposals. The idea of making that practice mandatory, recommended by ICSC in its report, should be considered carefully in the light of the Commission's Statute. The bodies concerned would also need to organize their schedules and agendas so as to allow for the participation of ICSC representatives and so as to avoid duplication; and, in case of doubt, ICSC should itself specify what questions were to be treated in the framework of the common system.

47. The Twelve endorsed in principle the introduction of special occupational rates for some specialized technical fields, provided that the purpose was to respond to recruitment problems for which concrete evidence existed; that those rates were never applied to all staff of a particular agency; and that the views of all the administrations were duly taken into account. Bearing in mind that staff costs represented a very significant element in budgets, a balance must be struck between the requirements of the labour market and the need to reduce costs in both national administrations and international organizations.

48. With regard to the conditions of service of the Professional and higher categories, the European Community had noted with interest that the Secretary-General was considering introducing a career level related to the Assistant Secretary-General level. If a formal proposal to that effect was forthcoming, it should be examined expeditiously by ICSC, particularly from the standpoint of its implications for the common system. With regard to the conditions of service of Assistant Secretaries-General and Under-Secretaries-General, the proposals of ICSC and the Secretary-General seemed highly advantageous for those concerned. The Twelve were nevertheless inclined to study them in the light of the conclusions of the Advisory Committee.

49. The Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) had put forward a proposal, endorsed by the Secretary-General, for modifying the modalities for application of the Noblemaire principle. Account must be taken of all related factors when considering that proposal. The Twelve also wished to know how matters stood with regard to the methodology for identifying the highest-paid civil service that the Commission had been requested to prepare.

50. Now that the Commission had concluded that the methodology for determining the cost-of-living differential between New York and Washington was deficient and that it should be replaced by the methodology developed by a

(Mr. Stitt, United Kingdom)

consultancy firm, information would be welcome on the technical impact of such a decision on measurement of the margin between remuneration of United Nations officials and that of United States officials.

51. The latest proposals of ICSC on the level of the base/floor salary scale would be examined with interest. The Twelve would be grateful for a precise quantification of the savings deriving from the provisions of the mobility and hardship scheme. Similarly, with regard to the dependency allowances for the Professional and higher categories, it would be interesting to know what was the relationship between those allowances and social security benefits in the countries concerned. The children's allowance should be reviewed every two years, as should the secondary dependant's allowance; and the Commission should provide further information on the rationale for determining the level of the latter.

52. The Twelve were ready to endorse the methodology for determining the amount of the education grant proposed by the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions and described in annex VII of the ICSC report; but the discrepancy between effective increases and recommended increases revealed in the table in paragraph 248 of the report should be accounted for. In addition, the estimates should be revised to take account of currency fluctuations which might have reduced costs expressed in dollars.

53. The States members of the European Community were generally in favour of the Commission's decisions concerning a high participation rate of women in the secretariats of United Nations organizations, especially at the senior levels. The intentions of the Secretary-General in that respect were also welcome. It would be useful to know the extent to which the measures outlined in paragraph 296 of the report reflected existing practice, in particular on family-related issues and spouse employment.

54. Any measure designed to strengthen the independence of the international civil service would be viewed with sympathy by the States members of the European Community.

55. The Flemming principle must continue to be applied with respect to the remuneration of General Service staff, although some of the modalities used resulted in grade overlap. Further information would be welcome concerning the definition of commuting distance, the adjustments made in respect of the advantages of public sector employment, the reasons why no interim adjustments would in future be made for a six-month period prior to the reference date of the salary survey, and the expected date of issue of the report requested by the General Assembly in section XIII, paragraph 3, of resolution 45/241.

56. The most prominent pensions issue was the methodology for calculation of the pensionable remuneration of General Service staff, for it lay at the root of a serious anomaly, the phenomenon known as income inversion. It was regrettable that the Pension Board had not been able to reach a consensus on

(Mr. Stitt, United Kingdom)

the issue, but it was significant that the governing bodies and executive heads of all the organizations had recognized the need for change. The European Community requested that the statistics contained in annex III of document ICSC/35/R.12 should be communicated to member States. The arrangements endorsed by ICSC were close to the compromise elaborated by the Chairman of the Pension Board; they were based on the principle of income replacement and were designed to remove two of the causes of income inversion. Furthermore, the transitional measures envisaged in paragraph 99 (e) of the ICSC report guaranteed that in no case would the pensionable remuneration of any staff member be reduced. However, it was not clear how the date for implementation of the new system had been chosen.

57. The question of the pensionable remuneration of ungraded officials was no doubt a sensitive one. The States members of the European Community fully appreciated the decision of the governing body of UNESCO concerning its Director-General and the efforts made to devise alternative solutions. However, they would be grateful for further information about those efforts, in particular as to whether the resulting pensions would in fact be calculated in dollars.

58. The States members of the European Community could support the proposed amendments to the regulations of the Pension Fund. They noted with satisfaction that the management of the Fund's investments, with assets in excess of \$10 billion, had produced satisfactory results despite the economic downturn. In their opinion, the protection of the interests of participants must remain paramount in the investment strategy; therefore the criteria of safety, profitability, liquidity and convertibility remained important.

59. Mr. OSELLA (Argentina), speaking on behalf of the delegations of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela, said that they attached great importance to the conditions of service of United Nations staff and believed that the exchange of views between the staff representatives and ICSC should be pursued, for it enriched the debate and facilitated decisions. The biennialization of the Fifth Committee's programme of work must not be detrimental to the staff, and it was therefore necessary to provide for exceptions in the case of adjustment of the base/floor salary scale.

60. In the section of resolution 46/192 dealing with the pensionable remuneration of General Service staff the General Assembly had endorsed the conclusion of the Commission and the Pension Board that new studies of possible methodologies should be made in order to determine the fairest solution for all sides. Since it was extremely difficult to make an accurate comparison with local schemes, it was preferable, as the Commission thought, to discontinue the calculation of pensions on the basis of local practice.

61. Given the difference between rates of remuneration in the United Nations and in the reference civil service, ICSC proposed an increase of 6.9 per cent

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(Mr. Osella, Argentina)

in the base/floor salary scale. In view of the importance of the scale, the 15 Latin American delegations were ready to participate constructively in the negotiations on the issue. They supported the ICSC decision to retain the present conditions for granting the housing allowance and were pleased that the allowance benefited mainly staff members at the lower levels of the Professional category and facilitated staff rotation. They hoped that at its next session the Commission would complete its study of the components to be used in measuring the cost-of-living differential between New York and Washington. They also endorsed its decision to retain the present method of calculating dependency allowances and were willing to take an active part in the negotiations on the proposed increase in the children's allowance and the secondary dependant's allowance.

62. Now that the Commission had decided to reaffirm the Flemming Principle it was to be hoped that the review of the methodology for determining the conditions of service of General Service staff would guarantee the Organization the services of highly skilled local staff. The 15 countries supported the methodology for determining the level of the education grant, which they thought should be reviewed in the near future, and the ICSC recommendations concerning the granting of the mobility and hardship allowance. They endorsed the recommendations of the Working Group on the Status of Women but insisted that the principle of equitable geographical distribution must be respected. The unilateral decision of the International Telecommunication Union to award a special post allowance was regrettable and must not constitute a precedent. However, as the Commission said in paragraph 177 of its report, special occupational rates could be introduced in the common system on an exceptional basis in order to solve the problems encountered in the recruitment and retention of staff in certain technical fields.

AGENDA ITEM 104: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993 (continued)

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.1/47/L.1/Rev.2 concerning agenda item 60 (A/C.1/47/L.1/Rev.2 and A/C.5/47/49)

63. The CHAIRMAN said that the Advisory Committee recommended that the Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/C.1/47/L.1/Rev.2, it would need to authorize the Secretary-General to provide, on an exceptional basis, the required services to the Preparatory Commission for the Organization on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons as an advance from the General Fund of up to \$626,000 to be reimbursed to the United Nations by the Preparatory Commission on a priority basis within 90 days of the beginning of rendering of services by the United Nations, in other words, before 15 April 1993. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the Advisory Committee's recommendation.

64. It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 105: PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued) (A/47/3, A/47/6, A/47/16 (Parts I and II) and Add.1, A/47/32 and Add.1; A/C.5/47/46)

Proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997

Major programme I. Maintenance of peace and security, disarmament and decolonization

Programme 5. Question of Palestine

65. Mr. COHEN (Israel) requested that due note should be taken of his delegation's serious reservations to that programme.

Major programme III. International cooperation for economic and social development

Programme 11. Overall issues and policies, including coordination

66. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the recommendation of CPC on programme 11 as contained in paragraph 76 of its report (A/47/16 (Part II)).

67. It was so decided.

Programme 45. Africa: critical economic situation, recovery and development

68. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the recommendations of CPC on programme 45 as contained in paragraph 201 of its report (A/47/16 (Part II)).

69. It was so decided.

Major programme IV. International economic cooperation for development

Programme 12. Global development issues and policies

70. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the recommendation of CPC on programme 12 as contained in paragraph 90 of its report (A/47/16 (Part II)).

71. It was so decided.

Programme 13. Trade and development

72. Mr. OSELLA (Argentina) recalled that the Trade and Development Board had set priorities after the CPC session. He recommended that the Committee should take them into account.

73. Mr. STITT (United Kingdom) was not opposed to the Committee approving the recommendations of the Trade and Development Board. However, he was not convinced by the chosen order of priorities.

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74. Mr. SPAANS (Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC)) said that the Trade and Development Board's recommendations were available to the Committee. In view of the recommendations of CPC, it would be appropriate for the General Assembly to take them into account and perhaps endorse them.

75. The CHAIRMAN said that the comments concerning the Trade and Development Board's review of programme 13 applied also to programmes 14 and 15. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the recommendation of CPC on programme 13 as contained in paragraph 95 of its report (A/47/16 (Part II)), on the understanding that the comments made by Committee members regarding that programme would be taken into consideration along with the conclusions and recommendations of the Trade and Development Board during informal consultations.

76. It was so decided.

Programme 14. Trade expansion, export promotion and service sector development

77. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada) endorsed the recommendations of CPC regarding programme 14. However, he thought that the post of Executive Director of the International Trade Centre, which had long been vacant, should be filled without delay.

78. Mr. CARDOSO (Brazil) agreed with the representative of Canada and recalled that the Board of Auditors had also strongly recommended filling the post in question.

79. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the recommendation of CPC on programme 14 as contained in paragraph 101 of its report (A/47/16 (Part II)), on the understanding that the comments made by members of the Committee regarding that programme would be taken into account along with the conclusions and recommendations of the Trade and Development Board during informal consultations.

80. It was so decided.

Programme 15. Least developed, land-locked and island developing countries, and special programmes

81. Mr. AL-MAKTARI (Yemen), referring to paragraph 106 (a) of the report of CPC (A/47/16 (Part II)), requested that the reference to debt-servicing should be retained and not replaced by a reference to the private sector.

82. Mr. AL-ARIMI (Oman) agreed with the representative of Yemen and asked for clarification of the term "geographical handicaps", also contained in that paragraph.

83. Mr. MARRON (Spain) noted that the Spanish version of the report referred to the external sector, not the private sector.

84. Mr. SPAANS (Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC)) confirmed that CPC had never intended to mention the private sector in that regard.

85. Mr. BAUDOT (Controller) explained to the representative of Oman that the term "geographical handicaps" referred to land-locked and small island developing countries. He also pointed out that, in referring to overall external constraints rather than to debt-servicing alone, CPC had sought to ensure that more countries were included.

86. Mr. BEN HAMIDA (Tunisia) observed that the Arabic version of the CPC report did not conform to the other versions. He requested the Secretariat to ensure that the translations of documents in the different official languages were consistent.

87. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the recommendation of CPC on programme 15 as contained in paragraph 106 of its report, on the understanding that the comments made with respect to the programme would be taken into consideration during informal consultations.

88. It was so decided.

Programme 16. Environment

89. The CHAIRMAN recalled that CPC had not considered the proposed revisions to the programme, as the relevant document had not been issued in time. He drew attention to document A/47/6 (Prog. 16) and Corr. 1, as well as to section B of document A/C.5/47/46, which contained the recommendations of the Second Committee.

90. Mr. STITT (United Kingdom) said he was somewhat concerned that many elements of the programme were regarded as priorities. He hoped that, in future, all relevant documents would be submitted to CPC on time, particularly when the proposed revisions were significant.

91. The CHAIRMAN said that if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the proposed revisions to programme 16 of the medium-term plan.

92. It was so decided.

Programme 17. Science and technology for sustainable development

93. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the recommendations of CPC on programme 17 as contained in paragraphs 118 and 119 of its report (A/47/16 (Part II)).

94. It was so decided.

Programme 18. Population

95. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the recommendation of CPC on programme 18 as contained in paragraph 125 of its report (A/47/16 (Part II)).

96. It was so decided.

Programme 19. Natural resources

97. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the recommendation of CPC on programme 19 as contained in paragraph 128 of its report (A/47/16 (Part II)).

98. It was so decided.

Programme 20. Energy

99. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the recommendation of CPC on programme 20 as contained in paragraph 134 of its report (A/47/16 (Part II)).

100. It was so decided.

Programme 21. Public administration and finance

101. Mr. STITT (United Kingdom) drew the Committee's attention to the fact that programme 21 had not been considered by the relevant intergovernmental body before reaching CPC. The same held true for other programmes. The credibility of the planning process rested to a certain extent on non-technical bodies, such as the Fifth Committee, which ought to be able to rely on appropriate technical advice. He hoped that efforts would be made in the future to ensure that the competent bodies adopted a schedule that would enable them to submit their opinions sufficiently in advance.

102. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the recommendation of CPC on programme 21 as contained in paragraph 136 of its report (A/47/16 (Part II)).

103. It was so decided.

Programme 22. Human settlements

104. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the recommendation of CPC on programme 22 as contained in paragraph 138 of its report (A/47/16 (Part II)).

105. It was so decided.

Programme 23. Transnational corporations

106. Mr. SUGANO (Japan) said that, in view of the new facts which had recently come to light in connection with the work on the code of conduct on transnational corporations, his delegation had difficulty in accepting the conclusions of CPC with regard to programme 23. During the consultations held on 21 and 23 July 1992, which had been initiated by the President of the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly, delegations had agreed that it was currently impossible to reach agreement on the code of conduct and that the issue should be deferred for an indeterminate period. They had felt that the changes in the world economy warranted a new approach by the Commission on Transnational Corporations at its next session, such as the drafting of guiding principles or other instruments on foreign investment. Given that new state of affairs, his delegation wished to propose two amendments. First, in paragraph 23.13 of the medium-term plan, the phrase "While the original objectives of the code are still valid" should be replaced by the words "on the other hand". Secondly, in paragraph 23.15 (a), the phrase "through the adoption of a code of conduct on transnational corporations" should be replaced by "through the adoption of appropriate international arrangements". His delegation hoped that those amendments would be taken into consideration in the Committee's conclusions.

107. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the recommendation of CPC on programme 23 as contained in paragraph 145 of its report (A/47/16 (Part II)), on the understanding that the comments made with respect to the programme would be taken into consideration during informal consultations.

108. It was so decided.

Programme 24. Statistics

109. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the recommendation of CPC on programme 24 as contained in paragraph 147 of its report (A/47/16 (Part II)).

110. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly
FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION
Official Records

FIFTH COMMITTEE
30th meeting
held on
Monday, 23 November 1992
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 30th MEETING

Chairman:

Mr. DINU

(Romania)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative
and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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AGENDA ITEM 105: PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued)

Proposed revisions to the medium plan for 1992-1997 (continued)

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

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Distr. GENERAL
A/C.5/47/SR.30
8 December 1992
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The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 105: PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued) (A/47/3, A/47/6, A/47/16 (Parts I and II) and Add.1, A/47/32 and Add.1 and A/C.5/47/46)

Proposed revisions to the medium plan for 1992-1997 (continued)

Major programme V

Programme 25

1. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to endorse the recommendation of CPC on programme 25, which was contained in paragraph 57 of its report A/47/16 (Part I).

2. It was so decided.

Programme 26

3. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to endorse the recommendation of CPC on programme 26, which was contained in paragraph 61 of its report A/47/16 (Part I).

4. It was so decided.

Programme 27

5. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to endorse the recommendation of CPC on programme 27, which was contained in paragraph 65 of its report A/47/16 (Part I).

6. It was so decided.

Programme 28

7. The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the recommendation of CPC on programme 28 was contained in paragraph 155 of its report A/47/16 (Part II).

8. Mr. CLAVIJO (Colombia) said that it was wrongly stated in paragraph 155 (c) of the CPC report that CPC had recommended that subparagraph 2 should be given high priority. The proposal had not been adopted by CPC. The order of priority should therefore not be changed.

9. Mr. SPAANS (Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Coordination) remarked that the conclusions and recommendations contained in paragraph 155 of the CPC report conformed with the decisions taken by that Committee during the session.

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10. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to endorse the recommendation of CPC on programme 28, which was contained in paragraph 155 of its report A/47/16 (Part II), on the understanding that the comments made on that programme would be taken into consideration during the informal consultations.

11. It was so decided.

Programme 29

12. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to endorse the recommendation of CPC on programme 29, which was contained in paragraph 70 of its report A/47/16 (Part I).

13. It was so decided.

Major programme VI

Programme 30

14. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to endorse the recommendation of CPC on programme 30, which was contained in paragraph 165 of its report A/47/16 (Part II).

15. It was so decided.

Programme 31

16. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to endorse the recommendation of CPC on programme 31, which was contained in paragraph 87 of its report A/47/16 (Part I).

17. It was so decided.

Programme 32

18. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to endorse the recommendations of CPC on programme 32, which were contained in paragraph 95 of its report A/47/16 (Part I) and paragraph 172 of its report A/47/16 (Part II).

19. It was so decided.

Programme 33

20. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to endorse the recommendations of CPC on programme 33, which were contained in paragraph 101 of its report A/47/16 (Part I) and paragraph 174 of its report A/47/16 (Part II).

21. It was so decided.

Programme 34

22. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to endorse the recommendation of CPC on programme 34, which was contained in paragraph 107 of its report A/47/16 (Part I).

23. It was so decided.

Major programme VII

Programme 35

24. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to endorse the recommendation of CPC on programme 35, which was contained in paragraph 113 of its report A/47/16 (Part I).

25. It was so decided.

Programme 36

26. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to endorse the recommendation of CPC on programme 36, which was contained in paragraph 177 of its report A/47/16 (Part II).

27. It was so decided.

Programme 37

28. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to endorse the recommendation of CPC on programme 37, which was contained in paragraph 182 of its report A/47/16 (Part II).

29. It was so decided.

Major programme VIII

Programme 38

30. The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the recommendation of CPC on programme 38 was contained in paragraph 195 of its report A/47/16 (Part II).

31. Mr. MORET (Cuba) remarked that the questions concerning the Department of Public Information must be examined in greater detail and that the Department's mandate must not be changed, especially with regard to the information centres. His delegation did not support the proposal that the News Distribution Section should be transferred to the Department of Public Information. Moreover, as he had had occasion to make that observation with regard to other programmes, his delegation was opposed to the fact that the new paragraph 38.3 referred to the delivery of timely and comprehensive information regarding potential threats to peace and security without specifying that international peace and security were intended - which left the door open to interpretations which might be contrary to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of States. The same remark applied to item (h) of the new paragraph 38.7.

32. Mr. CLAVIJO (Colombia) shared the concerns of the Cuban delegation, stressing that the recommendation in paragraph 195 of the CPC report was conditional upon the recommendation in paragraph 194. The Colombian delegation could support the recommendations in question only in so far as the matter of institutional arrangements referred to in paragraph 194 was settled.

33. The CHAIRMAN stated that programme 38 would be taken up again in informal consultations.

The meeting was suspended at 11.40 a.m. and resumed at 12.05 p.m.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

34. Mr. ACAKPOSATCHIVI (Secretary of the Committee) read out the work programme of the Committee for the current week, as formulated so far. Moreover, as for considering the Joint Inspection Unit item, he pointed out that the work of the Committee depended on the work of the Advisory Committee, whose report thereon would soon be available.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly
FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION
Official Records

FIFTH COMMITTEE
31st meeting
held on
Tuesday, 24 November 1992
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 31st MEETING

Chairman: Mr. DINU (Romania)

later: Mr. ZAHID (Morocco)
(Vice-Chairman)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and
Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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AGENDA ITEM 104: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993 (continued)

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AGENDA ITEM 105: PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued)

Proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997
(continued)

* Items considered together.

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A/C.5/47/SR.31
14 December 1992
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92-57983 6492S (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 113: UNITED NATIONS COMMON SYSTEM (continued) (A/47/30; A/C.5/47/25 and A/C.5/47/36-38)

AGENDA ITEM 114: UNITED NATIONS PENSION SYSTEM (continued) (A/47/9 and A/47/578; A/C.5/47/8 and A/C.5/47/25)

1. Ms. ROTHEISER (Austria) said that her delegation shared the Secretary-General's view that the United Nations should be able to recruit and retain staff of the highest calibre, and it reaffirmed its support for the Noblemaire and Flemming principles. She regretted that the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) had not conducted the study on the highest-paid civil service, since she seriously doubted that the United States civil service was still the most highly remunerated. Her delegation requested that the study should be conducted.

2. Her delegation shared the Secretary-General's conviction that the conditions of employment of the Professional and higher categories were not competitive. It therefore supported the Commission's recommendation for a 6.9 upward adjustment in the base/floor salary scale and agreed to consider any future adjustments on an annual basis. Her delegation also endorsed the increases proposed for the dependency allowances and the education grant, which merely compensated for inflation. Likewise, her delegation was not a priori opposed to the recommendations of ICSC to increase the remuneration of Assistant Secretaries-General, Under-Secretaries-General, Directors and Professional staff.

3. With regard to the remuneration of the General Service and related categories and the methodology for surveys of conditions of employment, she stressed the need for strict adherence to the Flemming principle. Her delegation was concerned at the Commission's decision concerning that method, since the exclusion of employers with fewer than 100 employees might distort the surveys, particularly in small countries. Moreover, her delegation could not approve the elimination of the language factor in duty stations where the local language was not a working language of the United Nations.

4. She noted that the tripartite body of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board had been unable to agree on the methodology for determining the pensionable remuneration for the General Service and related categories. The "decisions" contained in paragraph 99 of the ICSC report (A/47/30) were unconvincing: the choice of the percentage of net salary for the calculation of pensionable remuneration seemed arbitrary. It was essential to find a solution acceptable to the three parties represented on the Pension Board. Her delegation requested that the General Assembly should consider the question at its forty-ninth session.

5. Moreover, she questioned whether the Commission could decide on the methodology governing pensionable remuneration in the light of article 11 (b)

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(Ms. Rotheiser, Austria)

of its statute. The provisions of paragraph 99 of the ICSC report should therefore not be considered to be decisions but merely recommendations. The issue should be taken up by the Pension Board, and it was up to the General Assembly to decide on the Board's recommendations; that should be reflected in the Committee's resolution regarding the matter.

6. Her delegation cautioned against opening the door to exceptional measures, such as the establishment of special rates for certain professional groups, which could undermine the common system. Her delegation supported the recommendation of ICSC that the General Assembly should make it mandatory for all organizations to invite the Commission to be represented at meetings where proposals pertaining to any aspect of conditions of employment, other than pensions, were discussed.

7. Her delegation commended the wise investment policy of the Pension Fund, whose market value had increased in spite of the overall slow-down of the world economy. However, her delegation was concerned at the outstanding tax refunds, which had reached \$US 7.8 million at the end of September 1992. It agreed with the Board of Auditors that more effective measures should be taken in effecting appropriate disposition of the outstanding taxes. The Pension Fund should consider stopping any investment in countries that did not recognize its tax-exempt status.

8. Her delegation stressed the importance of an ongoing dialogue between ICSC and staff representatives, since an improvement of relations between the two parties would be in the interest of the United Nations system as a whole.

9. Ms. SHEARHOUSE (United States of America) said that ICSC and the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board faced the difficult task of reconciling the need to offer competent staff attractive conditions of employment while taking into account the very real resource constraints faced by Member States as the responsibilities of the United Nations system expanded. Her delegation was pleased with the plans of ICSC and the Pension Board to biennialize their programmes of work, and it concurred with the Commission's request that adjustments to the base/floor salary scale should continue to be considered on an annual basis.

10. Her delegation supported the decisions of ICSC regarding the decision of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) to grant a special post allowance, and unreservedly supported the recommendation that the General Assembly should make it mandatory for all organizations to invite the Commission to be represented at meetings where proposals pertaining to conditions of employment were discussed. It was the responsibility of governing councils to support the Assembly's decisions and prevent the implementation of any measure that might be harmful to the common system. Executive heads should exercise restraint in proposing actions that were not compatible with the common system.

/...

(Ms. Shearhouse, United States)

11. While her delegation generally endorsed the recommendations, contained in paragraph 69 of the ICSC report, concerning pensionable remuneration for ungraded officials, it would prefer that United Nations officials participated in the Pension Fund. It also supported the general thrust of the recommendations regarding the methodology for determining the pensionable remuneration for the General Service and related categories, since the current method gave rise to anomalies. Paragraph 99 (e) of the report provided adequate transitional measures to protect already attained pensionable remuneration levels in cases where the revised pensionable remuneration levels were lower than those currently in effect.

12. Her delegation could support the proposed increase in the base/floor salary scale. However, it was difficult to understand how the measure in question could generate an increase of \$8.8 million in staff assessment, as indicated in paragraph 6 of document A/C.5/47/37, while the Secretariat had estimated the costs for 1993 at slightly over \$1 million.

13. Her delegation supported the conclusions of ICSC concerning the rental subsidy. It also supported the introduction of special occupational rates for certain professional groups in the common system. With respect to the proposed increases in dependency allowances for the Professional and higher categories, her delegation could support the proposed increase of the children's allowance but it had strong reservations about the proposed increase in the secondary dependant's allowance, and recommended that it should remain at its current level. While her delegation could support the proposed increases in the education grant, it requested a breakdown by level of education of the increases in the maximum reimbursable level and the increase in boarding costs. It looked forward to the results of the review of the total cost to the common system of education grant entitlements, and requested that that information should also be broken down by education level and made available to Member States.

14. Her delegation did not see the need to revise the methodology for determining the cost-of-living difference between New York and Washington. Since the salaries of the comparator civil service had recently been changed to reflect the duty station, it seemed more logical that the cost of labour for the comparator in New York should have more bearing on what the United Nations paid its staff in New York. Rather than continuing the study, it would be more worthwhile to consider how the comparator's new pay-setting practices would affect those of the common system.

15. With regard to the conditions of service of Assistant Secretaries-General and Under-Secretaries-General, she noted that, in paragraph 207 of its report, ICSC recommended approximate working equivalents between those categories and equivalent officials in the comparator civil service. While it recognized the difficulties in making any technically sound determination of grade equivalencies, the Commission had used the approximate working equivalents as a basis for recommending a 7 per cent to 11 per cent increase in remuneration

(Ms. Shearhouse, United States)

levels for the aforementioned officials. Since equivalencies had little value, her delegation could not support the recommendation based on them. With regard to housing arrangements for officials at those levels, ICSC recommended increased subsidies without providing any justification or imposing any limitations, leaving it to each organization to develop precise guidelines on the matter. Her delegation would prefer to have a universally applicable set of guidelines established. As for representation allowances, which should not be simply salary supplements, she recommended that action on the Commission's proposal should be deferred until ICSC proposed guidelines on the matter. On a more general level, her delegation recommended that all decisions regarding conditions of service of Assistant Secretaries-General and Under-Secretaries-General should be deferred until the Secretariat reform undertaken by the Secretary-General was completed.

16. She hoped that ICSC would, as a priority, review the imbalance between the margin levels for upper and lower Professional grades, recommend corrective measures, and submit its report to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session.

17. Her delegation was pleased to note that the mobility and hardship scheme appeared to be fulfilling its intended purpose. She agreed with the Commission's decision to review the question in 1995, at which time its impact could better be assessed.

18. With respect to the chapter of the report dealing with the remuneration of the General Service and related categories, she agreed with the recommended refinements in the application of the methodology for surveys of best prevailing conditions of employment at headquarters duty stations.

19. Her delegation welcomed the Commission's recommendations relating to the status of women in the common system, and supported the thrust of those recommendations.

20. With regard to the report of the Joint Staff Pension Board, she commended those responsible for managing the investments of the Pension Fund, and agreed with the current plans for preserving the principal of the Fund. Her delegation regretted that the Pension Board had been unable to reach a consensus on the pensionable remuneration of staff in the General Service and related categories.

21. Mr. KHAN (Bangladesh) said that the granting of a special post allowance to 90 per cent of the employees of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) was incompatible with the application of the common system and General Assembly resolution 46/191. His delegation therefore agreed with the decision of ICSC in that regard, in particular, the recommendation that it should be mandatory for all organizations to invite the Commission to be represented at meetings where proposals pertaining to conditions of employment were discussed.

(Mr. Khan, Bangladesh)

22. The proper functioning and transparency of ICSC in its work depended, inter alia, on staff participation under rule 37 of the Commission's rules of procedure. Bangladesh regretted that the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations and the Coordinating Committee for Independent Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations system had suspended their participation in the Commission's work, and hoped that they would reverse their decision, in the greater interest of all.

23. His delegation welcomed the arrangements regarding the biennialization of the programme of work of the Fifth Committee, and, at the same time, agreed with the Commission's decision to request the General Assembly to agree to examine adjustments to the base/floor salary scale on an annual basis. The Assembly should also consider future across-the-board increases in salary on a timely basis without waiting for an even-numbered year.

24. Bangladesh supported the decision to increase the base/floor salary scale by 6.9 per cent with effect from 1 March 1993. It welcomed the Commission's decision to examine the feasibility of establishing special occupational rates and looked forward to the report on the question to be submitted by the Commission in 1993.

25. His delegation supported the Commission's decision to maintain the existing methodology for the determination of dependency allowances for the Professional and higher categories, as well as the recommendation for an increase in those allowances with effect from 1 January 1993. It also supported the recommendations relating to the mobility and hardship scheme in paragraphs 282 and 283 of the Commission's report.

26. The most serious problem with regard to pensionable remuneration for General Service staff stemmed from income inversion. There were divergent views on the income replacement approach recommended in resolution 46/192 but, whatever position might be taken, what was important was to recognize the legitimate claims of future beneficiaries while at the same time ensuring equity among staff members in different categories.

27. There was a perception among some that the methodology for surveys of best prevailing conditions of employment at headquarters duty stations might contradict the Fleming principle by excluding from the comparison some of the best employers and including employers that paid excessively low salaries. The staff representatives were also opposed to having the ICSC secretariat supervise the preparation phase. He hoped that reason would prevail, and believed that any change should not only be technically sound but should also not result in the erosion of current conditions.

28. His delegation hoped that the recommendations of the Working Group on the Status of Women in the United Nations System would give further momentum to the efforts already under way in that regard. He wished to emphasize that, in the recruitment of women, special attention should be paid to women from the developing countries and to equitable geographical distribution.

(Mr. Khan, Bangladesh)

29. His delegation noted that no consensus had been reached in the Joint Staff Pension Board on the question of the pensionable remuneration of General Service staff. He agreed with the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) that it was important to guard against creating new anomalies in the process of eliminating others. His delegation appreciated the sound management of the investment of the Pension Fund investments.

30. Mr. KERSTEIN (Slovenia) said that, although Slovenia was not yet represented in the international civil service, it attached great importance to the common system and to the work of ICSC, whose impartiality must be beyond reproach. The independence of ICSC, which had been upheld by the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session, was absolutely essential.

31. His delegation believed that the unilateral decision taken by ITU to pay a special post allowance to a great portion of its staff undermined the coherence and the purpose of the common system, and certainly did not contribute to the elimination of competition in the recruitment of personnel. His delegation shared the view of ICSC that the action by ITU should not constitute a precedent, and strongly supported the recommendation contained in paragraph 43 (f) of its report.

32. His delegation was concerned about the decision of the staff representatives to suspend participation in the work of the Commission; that decision was unjustified and detrimental to the common system. Moreover, while the staff representatives should, indeed, be allowed to express their views in the Fifth Committee, the tone of one statement, which had directly questioned the legitimacy of ICSC, was most regrettable. It was for all parties concerned, and not for the Commission alone, to endeavour to strengthen the common system.

33. The conditions of service of the Professional and higher categories were of particular importance, and his delegation would therefore examine with interest the Commission's recommendation that the base/floor salary scale should be increased by 6.9 per cent with effect from 1 March 1993 (A/47/30, para. 118). As for the evolution of the margin between the net remuneration of the United States Federal Civil Service and that of the United Nations system, it agreed with the Commission that no action was necessary at the current stage in the management of the margin over the five-year period 1990-1994.

34. His delegation supported the Commission's recommendation regarding the introduction of special occupational rates as a means of addressing recruitment and retention problems for some technical occupations, provided that the Commission worked closely with the organizations involved in identifying the occupational groups and that those rates were not applied to the entire staff of the organizations concerned, since that could seriously damage the common system. With regard to the mobility and hardship scheme,

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(Mr. Kerstein, Slovenia)

Slovenia supported the Commission's recommendation that the existing parameters should be maintained until the follow-up report was submitted in 1995.

35. The methodology for determining pensionable remuneration for General Service staff created a serious problem of income inversion that could undermine the morale of the Professional staff. The Commission's decisions on that subject (A/47/30, para. 99) were a step in the right direction.

36. Mr. RAE (India) said he hoped that the question of the conditions of service of both Professional and the General Service staff, which gave rise to profound differences of opinion and was of great concern to the staff, could be resolved satisfactorily for all concerned. Whatever the satisfaction of working towards the noble objectives of the United Nations, the staff must be paid adequately if they were to be expected to perform with dedication the difficult and even dangerous tasks entrusted to them.

37. The Noblemaire principle had served well over the past four decades. However, some now thought that the common system was not flexible enough to respond adequately and expeditiously to the specific requirements of the organizations. The unilateral decision of ITU to grant a special post allowance illustrated that point. There was no question of jettisoning the Noblemaire principle, but it was perhaps time for the Commission to examine its application and suggest improvements. The biennialization of the Committee's work should give the Commission enough time to consider that issue.

38. The methodology for determining the pensionable remuneration of the General Service staff, which had aroused great controversy, should be logical and technically coherent. It was necessary gradually to correct the anomalies that had arisen while protecting the acquired rights of the staff. His delegation strongly supported the implementation of transitional measures. It agreed generally with the Commission's recommendations aimed at solving the income inversion problem with respect to General Service and Professional staff (A/47/30, para. 99). Its only reservation concerned the grossing-up procedures; it was not convinced of the need for a single scale of assessment rates for all staff and continued to favour the local tax approach, which had the advantage of simplicity. Information on the tax factor could easily be obtained when the General Service salary surveys were conducted.

39. The methodology used to carry out surveys of the conditions of service of General Service staff should be objective and transparent and should be based on the objectives of the Flemming principle. His delegation was in favour of the Commission playing a greater role in the supervision of surveys. However, it would like additional information on the reasons for the recommendation to increase from 50 to 100 the minimum number of employees in the selection of employers for inclusion in a survey.

40. His delegation agreed with the Commission that the mobility and hardship scheme was not an end in itself but a management tool to assist the

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(Mr. Rae, India)

organizations in rotation and assignment to hardship locations. Ideally, the terms and conditions of service should specifically provide for staff rotation. It was important to keep under review the question of the link between the base/floor salary scale and the mobility and hardship allowance, which made the scheme very costly. The organizations had strongly supported the continuation of the current scheme, which, they had said, made it possible to deploy staff effectively and reduce transfer costs and the number of vacancies. However, his delegation was not convinced that that scheme was the only viable solution, and it would like to obtain concrete figures on the savings achieved since the introduction of the scheme, as well as information on the reduction in the number of vacancies, particularly in United Nations Development Programme field offices.

41. His delegation wished to thank those involved in the management of the Pension Fund's investments, who had succeeded in obtaining a real rate of return of 4.3 per cent despite the world-wide stagnation in economic growth. It was happy to note the increase in investments in developing countries and the progress made in refunding outstanding tax claims.

42. Mr. WIBISONO (Indonesia) said that the biennialization of the Committee's programme of work, adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 46/220, should not be allowed to affect the staff adversely. The Commission's decision to request the Assembly to examine adjustments of the base/floor salary scale on an annual basis should solve that problem.

43. His delegation deplored the unilateral decision of ITU to pay a special post allowance to 90 per cent of its staff in the Professional and higher categories, despite the categoric opposition of ICSC and the General Assembly. It agreed with the Commission that that decision should not constitute a precedent and supported the recommendation that it should be mandatory for all organizations to invite the Commission to be represented at meetings where proposals pertaining to salaries, allowances, benefits and other conditions of employment were discussed.

44. His delegation thought it should be possible to reach an acceptable solution to the very thorny problem of pensionable remuneration for General Service staff without resorting to a reduction that might be seen as arbitrary. The Commission's recommendation that the base/floor salary scale should be increased by 6.9 per cent with effect from 1 March 1993 was commendable.

45. His delegation hoped that refinements would be made as quickly as possible in the methodology for determining the cost-of-living differential between New York and Washington, which was deficient. It supported in principle the use of special occupational rates and agreed that the Commission should work with the other organizations to identify occupational groups in technical fields where there had been serious difficulty in recruitment. Indonesia was in principle in favour of the proposed increase in the

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(Mr. Wibisono, Indonesia)

children's allowance and the secondary dependant's allowance. With regard to the review of the general methodology for surveys of the best prevailing conditions of employment at headquarters duty stations, there was general agreement on the validity of the Flemming principle. However, the staff representatives had expressed concern about the decisions taken by ICSC, which should perhaps seek to alleviate the doubts about the validity of the surveys. Above all, efforts had to be made to obtain objective data which could not be regarded as aimed at a preconceived result.

46. His delegation acknowledged the efforts made by the Working Group on the Status of Women in the United Nations System to identify the problems faced by women, recommend solutions and set targets for their representation.

AGENDA ITEM 145: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS OPERATION IN SOMALIA
(A/47/607 and A/47/674)

47. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the reports of the Secretary-General and the decisions of the Security Council concerning the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) were mentioned in paragraph 2 of the report of the Advisory Committee (A/47/674). The Security Council, which had established UNOSOM by its resolution 751 (1992) of 24 April 1992, had subsequently increased the total strength of the force to 4,219 all ranks, including a logistic support contingent of 719.

48. With regard to the question of the mandate of UNOSOM, addressed in paragraph 7 of the Advisory Committee's report, the Secretary-General had recommended that UNOSOM be established for an initial period of six months and had drawn up estimates for six-month periods running from 1 May 1992 to 31 October 1993. However, the Security Council had not yet specified the length of UNOSOM's mandate; the Advisory Committee considered it important that the question should be resolved at the earliest opportunity.

49. The initial estimate of total costs of the operation for the period from 1 May 1992 to 31 October 1993, including the pre-implementation phase, amounted to \$208.1 million. The related observations and recommendations of the Advisory Committee were contained in paragraphs 10 to 42 of its report. As indicated in paragraph 20, the deterioration of conditions in Somalia might jeopardize the full deployment of the operation as planned. The delay in the deployment of troops would affect the expenditure estimates for the period from 1 November 1992 to 30 April 1993.

50. With regard to accommodation, a considerable number of prefabricated units had been diverted from the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), which would probably not insist on their immediate replacement. On the basis of previous recommendations of the Advisory Committee which had already been accepted by the Fifth Committee, it was recommended that the cost of those units should not be included in the UNOSOM

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(Mr. Mselle)

budget. In paragraph 39 of its report, the Advisory Committee pointed out the need to coordinate effectively all UNOSOM activities under the authority of the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Somalia.

51. As indicated in paragraph 42 of its report, the Advisory Committee was recommending an appropriation and assessment of \$6,953,100 gross (\$6,741,600 net) for the period from 1 May to 31 October 1992 and \$102,698,900 gross (\$101,172,200 net) for the period from 1 November 1992 to 30 April 1993. It would examine the cost estimates for future periods in the light of the report which the Secretary-General intended to submit within the next six months and of the decisions of the Security Council.

52. Mr. BOIN (France) said that his delegation endorsed the comment made by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 9 of its report, i.e. that the Secretary-General's report contained insufficient detailed information under a number of items of expenditure. The draft resolution to be prepared by the Fifth Committee should contain a clear request for the Secretariat to include in its reports the elements mentioned in paragraph 40 of the ACABQ report.

53. With regard to purchases of vehicles in particular, his delegation wondered about the necessity of purchasing, or even renting, so much equipment and so many vehicles at a time when Member States had more than ample stocks of military equipment, in particular four-wheel drive vehicles, which they could assign to UNOSOM as voluntary contributions. An appeal to that effect should be made to Member States in the draft resolution. Furthermore, as the auditors had requested, it was absolutely essential to comply with the competitive bidding procedures and keep a very accurate inventory of equipment.

54. Good coordination was a guarantee of efficiency and economy, but it was not clear from a reading of paragraph 39 whether the Special Representative of the Secretary-General had the necessary authority to ensure the coordination of the activities of all the United Nations bodies in Somalia. In that connection the comment on the problems of sharing premises made by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 15 of its report gave rise to some concern.

55. Mr. INOMATA (Japan) said that an effort should be made to speed up the establishment of the budgets of peace-keeping operations. The Secretariat certainly had difficulties but, by definition, a budget must be drawn up before the beginning of the period in question. As to the submission of budgets, in paragraph 40 of its report the Advisory Committee requested the Secretariat to provide detailed information for an informed evaluation of the cost estimates. It added in paragraph 41 that the recent reports of the Secretary-General on the financing of peace-keeping operations did not address the concerns of the Advisory Committee with regard to the format and costing of the operations. His delegation endorsed those comments in full.

56. With regard to the duration of the mandate of UNOSOM, in paragraph 24 (c) of his report the Secretary-General recommended to the General Assembly that

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(Mr. Inomata, Japan)

it should authorize commitments for the period beyond 30 April 1993, should the operation be continued beyond that date. The Secretariat was presenting estimates based on its own assumptions and not on a decision of the Security Council. His delegation thought that before approving appropriations and their apportionment it was essential to know the duration of the operation's mandate. For what would happen if the operation was suspended? His delegation supposed that if the views stated by the ACABQ in paragraph 7 of its report were approved by the Committee and the General Assembly, the Secretariat would play the role of intermediary between the Assembly and the Security Council, which was the organ empowered to decide on the duration of the mandate.

57. The Japanese delegation had no difficulty with reducing the resources allocated to UNOSOM by \$14.5 million, for that ACABQ recommendation was based on an expert review and was not a budget cut. With regard to the prefabricated units to be transferred to UNOSOM from other operations, Member States must not be required to pay twice for the same material. His delegation therefore supported the relevant recommendations of the Advisory Committee.

58. Mr. Zahid (Morocco), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

59. Mr. TANG Guangting (China) said that his delegation was seriously worried about the situation in Somalia and supported UNOSOM unreservedly. It sincerely hoped that the parties concerned would combine their efforts to ensure peace and security in Somalia. It endorsed the recommendations of the Advisory Committee concerning the military expenditures. On the subject of documentation it wished to point out that it had received document A/47/674 only an hour before the beginning of the meeting and that document A/47/607 had not yet been distributed in Chinese. Since that made the Chinese delegation's consideration of the item more complicated, it might have requested deferral of the debate. However, it had not done so in order not to disrupt the Committee's work. But the Secretariat ought to make the necessary arrangements to prevent any recurrence of such a situation.

60. Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda) said that his delegation fully supported the United Nations operation in Somalia. It was glad that the Security Council had been able to make an appropriate recommendation on the mandate of the operation and that the personnel had been reinforced, particularly in the first contingent. It shared some of the doubts of the Japanese delegation about the operation's budget but thought that the Secretariat had been right to submit estimates for periods beyond the first phase. As the representative of France had suggested, it was also necessary to establish closer cooperation among the various United Nations bodies, under the authority of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. In paragraph 34 of its report the Advisory Committee said that late arrival of aircraft would result in a saving. Before the Committee welcomed that saving, it would have to know whether the late arrival did not in fact represent a cost in terms of the efficiency of the operation.

61. Mr. FRANCIS (Australia) asked whether it would be possible to invite an official responsible for field operations to attend the informal consultations on the item.

62. Mr. ONWUALIA (Nigeria) agreed with the representative of Japan that it was regrettable that so much time had been needed to implement the decision of the Security Council. He understood that, given the situation in the field, it had not been possible to take any decision regarding the length of the mandate. In that regard he shared some of the concerns expressed by the Advisory Committee. He trusted that other countries would make a contribution to ensure the success of the operation.

63. Mr. BAUDOT (Acting Controller), responding to the representative of Australia, said that all the Secretariat officials in a position to respond to the questions raised would be present at the informal consultations. He had taken note of the comments of the representatives of France and of Japan regarding coordination and the powers of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. The Special Representative had been invested with all the authority normally delegated by the Secretary-General for such operations, but given the tragic situation in Somalia it would be appropriate to strengthen coordination. With regard to the mandate of the operation, a means must be found of satisfying budgetary imperatives while meeting the concerns of the Security Council. The Assembly would need to meet again if the Security Council decided to extend the mandate of the operation, but that was routine. With regard to the comments in paragraph 40 of the Advisory Committee's report, he acknowledged that the information provided to the Advisory Committee and the Fifth Committee should be improved. At times there was a need to reconcile two conflicting objectives: to prepare the required budget quickly yet to submit full and accurate information. Further, the submission of the budgets of peace-keeping operations was even more complex than in the case of the regular budget. In any event the Secretariat would continue to strive for greater transparency.

AGENDA ITEM 104: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993 (continued)

Programme budget implications of draft resolutions A/47/L.17 and A/47/L.18 concerning agenda item 18 (A/C.5/47/48)

64. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), reporting orally on behalf of the Advisory Committee, said that the activities called for under the draft resolutions were described in paragraphs 1 to 11 of the statement submitted by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/47/48). The additional requirements at full cost were set out in paragraphs 12 to 17. Paragraph 14 indicated total additional requirements of \$541,400 (including \$293,800 for the holding of a seminar in the Pacific region). In the light of past experience in implementing the Special Committee's programme of work, the Secretary-General estimated that requirements would not exceed \$379,000, a figure which fell within the balance of the appropriation under section 37 of the programme budget for the 1992-1993

(Mr. Mselle)

biennium. Accordingly, the Committee might wish to inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt the draft resolutions under consideration, no additional appropriations would be required under the programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993.

65. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, on the basis of the statement of programme budget implications (A/C.5/47/48) and the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should draft resolutions A/47/L.17 and A/47/L.18 be adopted, it would be necessary to modify the programme of work for the biennium 1992-1993 as indicated in paragraph 10 of document A/C.5/47/48, but that no additional appropriations would be required under sections 31, 37 or 41 of the programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993.

66. It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 105: PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued)

Proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997
(continued) (A/47/3, A/47/6, A/47/16 (Parts I and II and Add.1), A/47/32 and Add.1; A/C.5/47/46 and Add.1)

Major programmes IX (Common support services) and X (Administrative services)

67. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee on Conferences had reviewed the proposed revisions to programme 39 of major programme IX at its 1992 session and that in paragraph 105 of its report (A/47/32) it recommended approval of the revisions, with some cosmetic modifications.

68. Mr. INOMATA (Japan) said that it was surprising that the Advisory Committee had not submitted its comments on the two major programmes in question to the Fifth Committee, contrary to procedure under the current regulations. The Committee should not establish a regrettable precedent by making recommendations to the General Assembly without having consulted the competent technical body.

69. Mr. BAUDOT (Acting Controller) said that under the regulations the Advisory Committee should consider major programmes IX and X, but it had had no time to do so. The planning process as a whole needed to be reviewed, including those aspects relating to consultation with intergovernmental organs.

70. Mr. CLAVIJO (Colombia) agreed with the representative of Japan and proposed that the Chairman of the Advisory Committee should be asked for his comments.

71. Mr. STITT (United Kingdom), Mr. BIDNY (Russian Federation) and Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda) supported the comments made by the representative of Japan and urged the Committee to follow established procedure.

72. The CHAIRMAN said that he would take it that the Fifth Committee wished to invite the Advisory Committee to consider major programmes IX and X and to report thereon orally as soon as possible.

73. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.